

AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS

1. (Original) A streaming media server for providing a plurality of media streams comprising:

a) a cue generator for receiving an event detected signal and configuration information and based thereon for generating a cue having a predefined structure; wherein the cue can be used by a stream processing application (SPA) to receive information concerning an event whose timing is important to the receiver.

2. (Original) The server of claim 1 wherein the cue includes one of program timing, program structure, program identity, start time of a media program, and stop time of a media program.

3. (Original) The server of claim 1 wherein the stream processing application (SPA) is a program recording application.

4. (Original) The server of claim 1 wherein the stream processing application (SPA) is a program insertion application.

5. (Original) The server of claim 1 wherein the stream processing application (SPA) is a program modification application.

6. (Original) The server of claim 1 wherein the stream processing application (SPA) is a program adaptation application.

7. (Previously Presented) The server of claim 1 wherein the stream processing application (SPA) is a program switching application.

8. (Original) The server of claim 1 wherein the cue includes time sensitive program information.

9. (Original) The server of claim 1 wherein the cue includes a cue type that is one of an event notification cue, an event pending cue, an event termination cue, and an event continuing cue, and a user-defined custom cue.

10. (Original) The server of claim 1 wherein the predefined structure of the cue includes at least one of the following fields:

- an event type field for specifying an event type;
- a cue type field for specifying a cue type;
- a version field for specifying a cue command protocol version;
- a number field for specifying a number that in combination with the event type specified by the event type field uniquely describes an event;
- a duration field for specifying the time remaining before completion of a specified event;
- a date field for specifying date information;
- a time field for specifying time information;
- a label byte count field for specifying the byte count in bytes of a subsequent variable-length text field; and
- a variable-length label field for storing text suitable for display.

11. (Original) The server of claim 10 wherein the event type field is one of an advertisement event type, a video-frame event type, an interstice event type, an audio-track event type, an audio-segment event type, a video-segment event type cue, program-title event type, program-description event type, program-label event type, content-type event type, program-advisory, and user-defined event type.

12. (Original) The server of claim 10 wherein the date field includes data information encoded with a Society of Motion Picture and Television Engineer's (SMPTE) date encoding and wherein the time field includes time information encoded with a Society of Motion Picture and Television Engineer's (SMPTE) time encoding.

13. (Currently Amended) A method for delivering program timing, structure, and identity information in media streams comprising:

- identifying an event in the media stream;
- determining if the event is a structural point as defined by configuration information; ~~and~~
- generating a cue packet to represent the structural point; and
- including said cue packet in said media stream.

14. (Original) The method of claim 13 wherein the step of generating a cue packet to represent the structural point includes one of
generating the cue packet automatically; and
generating the cue packet manually with a user-operated trigger.

15. (Original) The method of claim 13 further comprising:
receiving a packet;
determining whether the packet is a cue packet;
when the packet is a cue packet, then determining if the cue packet triggers an action based on predetermined configuration parameters;
when the cue packet triggers an action, using information from the cue packet to perform a function;
otherwise, discarding the cue packet.

16. (Currently Amended) A content distribution network comprising:
a media server for broadcasting at least one media stream having at least one structural point; and
a server-side cue handling mechanism for delivering program timing, structure, and identity information related to the media stream in the form of a cue that is included in the related media stream.

17. (Original) The network of claim 16 further comprising:
a client-side cue handling mechanism for receiving packets, determining that a particular packet is a cue packet, and decoding program timing, structure, and identity information from the cue packet.

18. (Original) The network of claim 17 further comprising:
an application coupled to the client-side cue handling mechanism for using the program timing, structure, and identity information of the media stream to perform an application function.

19. (Currently Amended) The network of claim 17 further comprising:
an intermediary stream processing application for receiving the media stream that includes the cue packet, processing the media stream, and re-transmitting the media stream to one of other intermediary stream processing application and a client-side cue handling mechanism.

20. (Original) The network of claim 19 wherein processing the media stream includes processing at least one cue packet.

21. (Original) The network of claim 19 wherein re-transmitting the media stream to one of other intermediary stream processing application and receivers includes adding at least one cue packet to the media stream.

22. (Currently Amended) The network of claim 19 wherein re-transmitting the media stream to one of other intermediary stream processing application and receivers includes removing at least one cue packet ~~to~~ from the media stream.

23. (New) The server of claim 1 further comprising:
b) a stream generator for generating said media streams.

24. (New) The server of claim 1 wherein said cue generator is further operable to insert said generated cue into a corresponding media stream to which said generated cue relates.

25. (New) The server of claim 1 wherein said cue is generated as a Real-Time Transport Protocol (RTP) payload.

26. (New) The network of claim 16 further comprising:
a server-side stream generator for generating said at least one media stream, wherein said cue handling mechanism inserts said cue packet in the at least one media stream.

27. (New) The network of claim 26 further comprising:
a server-side network interface for communicating said at least one media stream having said cue packet inserted therein across a communication network to at least one client.

28. (New) The network of claim 27 wherein said network interface broadcasts said at least one media stream having said cue packet inserted therein to a plurality of clients.

29. (New) A method comprising:
generating a media stream at a stream generator of a media server;
identifying an event in the media stream;
determining if the event is a structural point as defined by configuration information;
generating, at a cue handling mechanism of the media server, a cue packet to represent the structural point; and
communicating said media stream and said cue packet from said media server to at least one intermediary network node;
said at least one intermediary network node modifying, based at least in part on said cue packet, said media stream to generate a modified media stream; and
said at least one intermediary network node communicating said modified media stream to at least one client receiver.

30. (New) The method of claim 29 further comprising:
said at least one client receiver processing said modified media stream to generate output to an end user.

31. (New) The method of claim 29 further comprising:
said cue handling mechanism inserting said cue packet into the media stream communicated from said media server to said at least one intermediary network node.

32. (New) The method of claim 31 wherein said modifying comprises:
adding at least one cue packet to the media stream.

33. (New) The method of claim 31 wherein said modifying comprises:
removing said cue packet from the media stream.

34. (New) The method of claim 31 wherein said modifying comprises:
inserting a second media stream into said media stream.

35. (New) The method of claim 34 wherein said second media stream comprises
at least one advertisement.

36. (New) The method of claim 29 wherein said media stream and said cue
packet are communicated from said media server a plurality of different intermediary
network nodes, wherein each of said different intermediary network nodes comprises
respective target client receivers to whom it communicates modified media stream
generated thereby.

37. (New) The method of claim 36 comprising:
generating, by a first of said intermediary network nodes, a first modified media
stream; and
generating, by a second of said intermediary network nodes, a different modified
media stream.